

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

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A method is provided of combining first and second attribute sets each comprising at least one attribute/value pair by which a named attribute is assigned a value that comprises one of a end value and a further attribute set. The first attribute set is, for example, a resource  
10 description whilst the second attribute set defines specific attribute values. The method involves carrying out a merge operation that combines the attribute/value pairs of the first and second attribute sets according to their levels in their respective attribute trees with conflicts arising between attributes having the same path in each tree being resolved, on a top-down basis, according to predetermined rules.

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